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## Wet And Wild



**DEEP-ROOTED:** A participant takes part in a bull race called 'Pacu Jawi' in Tanah Datar of Indonesia. Held annually to celebrate paddy harvest, the event has now become a major tourist attraction in the region. — Photo: AP

# Siddaramaiah takes U-turn on hijab ban

Says govt only contemplating on the issue

PTI  
 MYSURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday clarified that the administration was only contemplating lifting the ban on wearing hijab in educational institutions in the State and a decision will be taken after holding discussions at the government level. Addressing reporters here, he said, "We haven't done it (revoking Hijab ban) yet. Someone asked me a question (on lifting Hijab ban). I replied that the government is considering revoking it."

Asked whether it would be done in this academic year, the CM said it would be done after discussing at the government level. The clarification comes a day after he said that there was no restriction on wearing the religious headscarf in educational institutions and observed that choice of dress and food is personal. Siddaramaiah on Friday announced that his government will withdraw the ban order on the Hijab imposed by BJP and said that no politics should be done on what people prefer to wear and eat. He further said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's idea of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas is 'bogus'. "PM

## BJP accuses Karnataka CM of 'vitiating' academic atmosphere

**BENGALURU:** The BJP strongly reacted to Karnataka government's plans to withdraw the ban on wearing hijab in educational institutions in the State, saying the ruling Congress is carrying forward the British policy of 'divide and rule'. Speaking to reporters in New Delhi, BJP Karnataka chief BY Vijayendra accused Siddaramaiah of 'vitiating' the academic atmosphere. Charging the Congress with indulging in 'appeasement politics' ahead of Lok Sabha elections, Vijayendra claimed, "Even after so many years of independence, the literacy and employment rate among minorities is still 50 per cent. Congress never tried to elevate the condition of minorities. Congress believes in the divide and rule policy which British rulers had adopted. It amounts to carrying forward the British legacy," he said. PTI

Narendra Modi's sab ka saath-sab ka vikas is bogus. BJP is doing the work of dividing people and dividing society on the basis of clothes, dress, and caste. I have told you to withdraw the hijab ban," CM Siddaramaiah posted on X. Earlier in the day, Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge also defended his government's decision to withdraw the hijab ban imposed by the previous BJP government and said that the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government is working as per the law and framework of the Constitution. "Whatever the Karnataka government is doing

is as per the law and framework of the Constitution. Any policy that is detrimental to the development of Karnataka will be reviewed and removed if necessary," Priyank Kharge said. The Congress government has come under sharp criticism from the opposition BJP over the announcement on hijab. The Hijab row in the State erupted in January 2022 when the Government PU College in Udupi allegedly barred six girls wearing the hijab from entering. Following this, the girls protested outside the college over being denied entry. (SEE PAGE 2)

# State plans to merge Kodangal with erstwhile Mahabubnagar

STATE BUREAU  
 Hyderabad

The State government is exploring the possibility of merging the Kodangal constituency into the erstwhile Mahabubnagar district limits. The constituency is represented by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy.

Sources said oral instructions were already issued to officials to commence the feasibility exercise on merging

the constituency into the erstwhile district. At present, a few mandals in the Kodangal constituency, including Kosgi Maddur, Kothapally and Gundunal were included in the Narayanpet limits.

Likewise, apart from Kodangal constituency headquarters, Doultabad and Bomraspet mandals were added to the Vikarabad district limits. Efforts were now being made to delimit all

such mandals from these two districts and club them with the Mahabubnagar district. On the other hand, Gandeed and Mohammadabad mandals under Parigi constituency limits in Vikarabad district were included in Mahabubnagar limits. Now, there are possibilities of two mandals being included back in Vikarabad district and Koilkonda mandal under Mahabubnagar limits to be clubbed under

Narayanpet district limits. The new districts were formed on October 12, 2016. The erstwhile Mahabubnagar was divided into five districts and Shadnagar constituency, which was part of the old Mahabubnagar district, was included under Rangareddy limits. This apart, efforts were also underway to include the entire Kalwakurthy constituency into Nagarkurnool district. (SEE PAGE 2)

# Inter exams likely from February 28

CITY BUREAU  
 Hyderabad

The Intermediate Public Examinations (IPE) may commence from February 28, 2024. To this effect, on its part, the Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education has completed the annual examination schedule and has forwarded the proposed schedule to the State government.

The TSBIE has proposed three dates i.e. February 28, March 1 and 5 to commence the IPE to senior Education Department officials and Chief Minister's Office. A detailed day-wise schedule will be notified by the TSBIE after Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy gives

clearance, which is expected in a week. Every year, the intermediate examinations are scheduled in the second and third week of March. However, in view of the Parliament elections, the board has advanced the exam schedule and the same has been notified in its academic calendar.

Prior to the final inter examinations, pre-final examinations will be conducted by colleges in January followed by the environmental studies examination, which is a qualifying exam. Starting this year, the board has done away with Ethics and Human Values examination as the subject topics have been integrated into the language subjects. (SEE PAGE 2)

# 'Avoid Express buses for short travel'

CITY BUREAU  
 Hyderabad

Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) has appealed to women passengers to avoid travelling in Express buses for short distances.

TSRTC Managing Director VC Sajjanar said that it has come to the notice of the corporation that women were travelling in Express buses for short distances. This was causing serious inconvenience to those travelling to distant areas. "Women travelling short distances are requested to board the Palle Velugu buses and cooperate with the staff," VC Sajjanar said. (SEE PAGE 2)

# Merchant vessel with 21 Indians hit by drone

NEW DELHI

A merchant vessel, with 21 Indian crew, was hit by a suspected drone around 217 nautical miles off the Porbandar coast in the Arabian Sea on Saturday but there was no report of any casualties in the incident, Indian military sources and a maritime security agency said.

The incident comes against the backdrop of Iran-backed Houthi rebels stepping up attacks on ships in the Red Sea amid the Israel-Hamas conflict. A P-8I long-range maritime surveillance aircraft, deployed by the Indian Navy after the UK Maritime Trade Operations, or UKMTO, reported

that it received a report of an attack by Uncrewed Aerial System on a vessel causing an explosion and fire, adding the incident took place 200 nautical miles South West of Veraval in India. It said the fire was "extinguished" and there were no casualties. It is learnt that the vessel, sailing under a Liberian flag, was carrying crude oil from Al Jubail port in Saudi to Mangalore. The military sources said the vessel is now heading towards nearest port.

Indian Navy officials said a maritime patrol aircraft was sent following the incident and it flew overhead the merchant vessel and established contact with it. PTI

# Rs 5 lakh accident cover for gig workers

STATE BUREAU  
 Hyderabad

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said an accident insurance policy of Rs 5 lakh would be extended to cab drivers, food delivery boys and auto drivers, besides free treatment up to Rs 10 lakh under Rajiv Arogyasri.

In addition to these, a special app would be introduced for the convenience of cab drivers on the likes of Ola from T-Hub, he said. Four months ago, a food delivery boy had lost his life after falling from a building while being chased by a dog. Revanth directed officials to identify the victim's family and extend an assistance of Rs 2 lakh. (REPORT PAGE 5)

# Deaflympics medallist to return award

NEW DELHI

Deaflympics gold medallist Virender Singh Yadav, better known as Goonga Pehlwan, has now decided to return his Padma Shri to the government, showing solidarity with the country's top wrestlers.

Throwing his weight behind Sakshi Malik, who announced her retirement from the sport soon after Sanjay Singh's victory in the recent WFI polls, Virender said he would return the honour as a mark of protest against the election of Brij Bhushan's close aide. (SEE PAGE 2)

# I-T Dept notifies ITR forms 1, 4

NEW DELHI

The Income Tax Department has notified ITR forms 1 and 4, which are filed by individuals and entities with annual total income of up to Rs 50 lakh, for assessment year (AY) 2024-25.

Individuals, besides Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs), firms having income up to Rs 50 lakh and those having earnings from business and profession in the current fiscal (April 2023-March 2024) can start filing returns for the income earned this financial

year. ITR Form 1 (Sahaj) and ITR Form 4 (Sugam) are simpler forms that cater to a large number of small and medium taxpayers.

Sahaj can be filed by a resident individual having income of up to Rs 50 lakh and who receives income from salary, one house property, other sources (interest) and agricultural income of up to Rs 5,000. Sugam can be filed by individuals, HUFs and firms (other than Limited Liability Partnerships) being a resident having total income of up to Rs 50 lakh and income from business and profession. PTI

# Illicit drugs manufacturing facility busted

STATE BUREAU  
 Khammam

The Drugs Control Administration (DCA) busted an illicit drug manufacturing facility at the TSIIIC Industrial Park in Annarugudem village of Tallada mandal in the district.

In a statement on Saturday, Director General (Drugs Control Administration), VB Kamalasan Reddy said that based on credible information, a special team of the DCA raided unlicensed premises at plot number 15 at the industrial park on Friday. The DCA officers de-

Official of the Drugs Control Administration seized spurious anticancer and other drugs worth Rs 4.35 crore at the TSIIIC Industrial Park in Khammam

tected illicit manufacturing of drugs at the facility, which belonged to Aspen Biopharma. Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients, Valsartan and Clopidogrel, were found on the premises. Stock of drugs weighing about 935 kg was found and the stock was seized. The facility was being operated by one Upender Reddy, a close relative of Kadari Sateesh

Reddy, whose unlicensed premises at Macha Bolaram in Hyderabad was raided by DCA officers on December 4 and from where they seized spurious anticancer and other drugs worth Rs 4.35 crore. Sateesh Reddy, the prime accused, who absconded on December 4 following the seizure of spurious drugs from his premises was also the key

conspirator in running the illicit drugs manufacturing facility at Annarugudem village, Kamalasan Reddy said. DCA's deputy director C Rajavardhana Chary, assistant director G Prasad, drug inspectors K Devender Reddy, Ch Anil Kumar and Ch Sampath Kumar were among the officers who carried out the raid. The unit's production manager Kanugula Raju, store in-charge Vasanthapuram Sambashiva Rao and office in-charge Sappidi Sudhakar Reddy of the firm were present during the raid, which was conducted with the help of the local police.

Consular access to 303 flyers

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Imran's PTI loses bat symbol

WORLD | PAGE 09



Pandya may miss Afghan series

SPORT | PAGE 10



ENTERTAINMENT PAGE 12

PC gears up for Christmas

Actor shares pics of holiday dinner



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